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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

DDI #5623-82
8 July 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, National Intelligence Council
Vice Chairman, National Intelligence Council
National Intelligence Officer for Latin America
Deputy Director for Intelligence

FROM : Major General Edward B. Atkeson, USA
National Intelligence Officer for
General Purpose Forces

SUBJECT : Training and Effectiveness of the Salvadorian
Army []

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1. I had a discussion on 7 July 1982 with Army Staff officers involved with the planning and conduct of US training for the Salvadorian officer aspirants and the light infantry battalion between January and May 1982. My purpose was to determine how effective the program had been and whether we had gained any insights from the experience which might assist us in assessing the prospects for future Salvadorian success in the field. The opinions expressed were those of the officers interviewed and may or may not coincide with the official Army position (if there is one). []

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2. As you know, Brigadier General Fred Woerner, Commander of our 193rd Infantry Brigade in Panama, undertook a study of the Salvadorian Army last fall with an eye toward identifying weaknesses and developing a "realistic" program for improvement. ("Realistic" translates into something supportable under current aid programs with, perhaps, some modest increases for specific high pay-off projects.) Inter alia, Fred's report highlighted the following:

- A need for an overall strategic concept for the counter-insurgency effort.
- A critical shortage of small unit leaders.

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-- Grossly inadequate communications,
particularly secure communications.

-- Inadequate transport.

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- A critical restriction on US assistance to the Salvadorian Army is the ban on unit advisors. Training assistance in garrison is less effective than it could be if US officers were permitted to advise Salvadorian commanders on operational matters, particularly in the field. The reasons for the ban are well understood and fully complied with, but the price in diminished effectiveness should be recognized.
- The US is supporting the Salvadorian Army with about 40 per cent of what the Salvadorians could absorb if there were no political or fiscal constraints on what we could do. The Army Staff officers ventured no guess as to whether this level of support was adequate to

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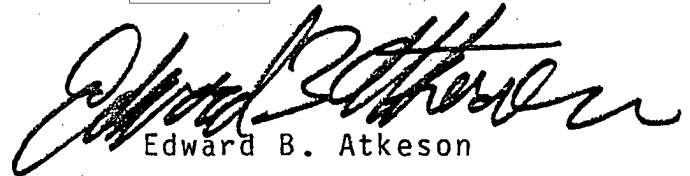
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the needs of the Salvadorians. They were neither optimistic nor pessimistic about the outcome of the conflict. They feel that the Salvadorians who came to the US for training received their money's worth, and that they absorbed about as much as US soldiers might under similar circumstances. [redacted]

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Edward B. Atkeson

Attachment:

El Salvador Training Paper

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